

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Village of Williamsville Planning and Architectural Review Board, held virtually via Zoom, on Monday, May 18, 2020, at 6:30 p.m.

*Due to the state-wide lock-down caused by the current pandemic, this meeting was held using Zoom. Planning Board members, Village officials and staff appeared live from their homes. A link to this virtual meeting was duly posted on the Village website for the public to access.

Present via Zoom: Wes Stone, Chairman
Kevin Lester, Member
Charles Rizzone, Member
Walter Pacer, Member
Ron Trigilio, Member
Catherine Waterman-Kulpa, Member
Amy Alexander, Alternate Member

Also Present via Zoom: Deborah A. Habes, P/T Clerk
Charles Grieco, Village Attorney
Tim Masters, Code Enforcement Officer
Keaton DePriest, Zoom Host

Excused: Elizabeth Holden, Member
Ellie Grenauer, Alternate Member
Matthew Etu, Village Board Trustee Liaison to Planning Board
Basil Piazza, Village Board Trustee

Chairman Stone opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

ON MOTION by Mr. Lester seconded by Ms. Alexander, it was moved to approve the minutes from the May 4, 2020 Planning Board meeting, as submitted.

Motion carried. 6 – 0. (Ms. Waterman-Kulpa abstained)

Log # 2019-PB-6a & 6b: Blocher Homes, 135 Evans St.
SEQR determination (Continued from May 4, 2020)

Ms. Alexander – Agreed with the revised draft SEQR that was distributed by Mr. Grieco today. We recognize that there are historic homes in the neighborhood and throughout the Village, but we now have a letter from SHPO stating that the property at 75 Evans St., which has been nominated for local landmark status by the Village’s HPC, has been deemed of no impact on the SEQR for project at 135 Evans St. (Blocher Home).

Mr. Lester – Questioned the information.

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Village of Williamsville Planning and Architectural Review Board, held virtually via Zoom, on Monday, May 18, 2020, at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Stone – The most recent information is directly from SHPO regarding the property at 75 Evans St.

The discussion continued regarding the SEQR determination. Village Attorney Grieco suggested the Planning Board has an obligation to act in as prompt a manner as possible and rule within reason, balancing all facets of the project. If the members believe they are missing information, then what is that information and what plan does it affect going forward? Listen to the applicants' representative present the revisions that they have recently submitted and make a decision.

Sean Hopkins, attorney for the applicants, was present.

Mr. Hopkins proceeded to give an overview of the history of the project. His clients have submitted revised plans that reflect the wishes of the Planning Board from the May 4, 2020 meeting. They are now proposing a total of 95 units, a decrease from the previously proposed 97 units. They are currently 57 units in the Blocher Home facility. He cited a difference in proposed building elevation from 661 ft. at the current lawn sign to 647 ft. going north. A bedrock outcropping is located behind the existing building and will not be disturbed during construction. There will also be no blasting on site.

Mr. Hopkins gave a short history of the Village's Community Plan vs the NMU with respect to Village "character" and its language of "meant to evolve over time". This language refers to a temporal aspect that the Village will continue over time. He further referred to the purpose of a mixed-use district which, he opined, makes sense in a Village setting. He further suggested that this project hits the points of this section and has been consistent with these goals and objectives. There should be a gradual increase in density over time. He then went on to list the design objectives which have been met by this project. There is a wide variety of uses that surround this project: In the Town of Amherst, there are large office parks to the north and upscale homes directly adjacent to the east. In the Village there are multi-family apartments and townhouses directly to the north and single and two-family houses and businesses to the south.

Mr. Hopkins listed the most recent revisions to the project: reduced the number of units; increased setbacks; reduced driveway setbacks; added more landscaping; changed building elevations. Believes that they have hit the criteria set forth by the NMU. He gave an overview of the environmental process. No required agencies expressed any negative comments. This does not trigger a Type I. Mr. Hopkins further referred to the revised SEQR Manual of 2020. Referred to SHPO's most recent letter of 5/18/20 which indicated the proposed landmarking of the property at 75 Evans St. would have no impact on the project at 135 Evans. It is not "substantially contiguous" to the subject property. His clients are hoping the Planning Board can continue the SEQR this evening.

Ms. Waterman-Kulpa – had issue with the residential driveways on the west side of Evans, opposite the proposed driveways of the project. Believes that an entrance/exit should be pursued from the Town of Amherst. Just because the Town Highway Superintendent has refused to allow this entrance/exit on Village Pointe Lane, does not mean it should be dropped by the Village. Mr. Hopkins responded he has tried numerous times for the Town to allow it and they are very firm

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Village of Williamsville Planning and Architectural Review Board, held virtually via Zoom, on Monday, May 18, 2020, at 6:30 p.m.

in their denial. Ms. Waterman-Kulpa urged that it still be pursued. She is concerned about the how the project’s proposed location of driveway entrances/exits onto Evans Street will affect the residential neighbors on the west side of Evans, opposite these driveways. Mr. Hopkins indicated the applicants would be happy to meet with these neighbors to discuss some kind of landscaped screening, etc.

Ms. Alexander – Is there any way that the project’s driveways onto Evans could be adjusted in location to have less of an impact on the west side neighbors?

Mr. Hopkins referred to both of the traffic studies that were completed and came to the same conclusion of there being no significant impact.

Mr. Pacer – As Chairman of the Traffic & Safety Committee, he knows that the committee recommended an entrance/exit onto Village Pointe Lane.

Mr. Trigilio – We can’t get everything we want in any project. It would be great if there was an entrance/exit onto Village Pointe Lane but it isn’t going to happen. He is moving in favor of re-locating the Evans St. driveways to better position them for the residents across the street to make this a better project.

There was discussion regarding NMU and mixed use and tax revenue. Mr. Grieco stated it is an allowable use within the NMU district but is not a required use within the NMU district.

ON MOTION by Ms. Alexander, seconded by Mr. Trigilio, it was moved to adopt the draft version dated 5/18/20, time stamped 4:08pm, of the Negative Declaration for the proposed project at 135 Evans St.

On the question:

Ms. Waterman-Kulpa – Wishes to strike where it said “it cannot conclude that the absence of a driveway onto Village Pointe Lane will result in significant adverse impact compared to existing conditions.”

Mr. Grieco referred to a majority vote on that issue by the Planning Board at their 5/4/20 meeting in agreement that the elimination of the Village Pointe Lane driveway would have no to small impact on traffic onto Evans St.

Roll call vote followed:

Roll Call:	Mr. Trigilio	Yes
	Mr. Pacer	No
	Mr. Lester	No
	Mr. Stone	Yes
	Mr. Rizzone	Yes

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Village of Williamsville Planning and Architectural Review Board, held virtually via Zoom, on Monday, May 18, 2020, at 6:30 p.m.

Ms. Alexander Yes
Ms. Waterman-Kulpa No

Motion carried. 4 – 3. Negative Declaration adopted as submitted.

Mr. Grieco – Now that the Negative Declaration has been adopted, he will finalize it. The next step is that the project will go to the ZBA for parking variance, then, if they receive the variance, will return to the Planning Board for architectural and site plan approval.

Mr. Hopkins asked for feedback on Planning Board the two waivers for parking. What are the preferences of the Planning Board? He will amend the ZBA application to reflect that.

Ms. Alexander and Mr. Stone – Prefer that the Planning Board address the waivers, not the Zoning Board.

Mr. Hopkins – Will get a more precise plan for Evans driveways.

Mr. Grieco agreed that the waiver process offers more flexibility. He thanked the Planning Board members for their diligence in this process.

Mr. Masters will let everyone know when the ZBA will next meet.

There being no other questions:

ON MOTION by Mr. Trigilio, seconded by Mr. Lester, it was moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:06 p.m.

Motion unanimously carried. 7 – 0.

Submitted by:

Deborah A. Habes, Clerk-P/T

**The next scheduled Planning Board meeting will be held on
June 1, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.
Meeting details will be posted on www.walkablewilliamsville.com**